

Social Science Research Council
Mellon Mays Graduate Initiatives Program
Annual Graduate Student Summer Conference
June 15-17, 2011
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

The Creative Potential of the Mellon Mays Network

Our academy is facing a watershed moment. Economic uncertainty along with public and private budget cuts coincide with current generational shifts across our fields of inquiry to create a far more unwieldy space for our work as emerging scholars. Though the academy is frequently seen as a bounded place, scholars are increasingly solicited to work in non-academic capacities. What implications do these developments have for academic research? To what extent should government or corporate interests shape intellectual inquiry? How does the current economic crisis change the context of academic knowledge production? The way we approach our work?

The 2011 Mellon Mays Summer Conference urges participants to ask: What is the fate of the humanities and social sciences under current conditions? What about area/ethnic studies programs? What are the research challenges that are unique to science programs? In what ways can our discourse intervene to address global crises? How is the value of knowledge changing, and where do we locate ourselves within these shifts?

As we identify opportunities for the creative potential of our work, we seek to take into account the careers and personal journeys of Mellon Mays Fellows. The participation of Mellon Mays fellows is intended to highlight solutions and to consider possibilities for social change. We invite you to link your research to a problem in the university, or to previous crises (or transformations) in the infrastructures surrounding the creation of public bases for intellectual effort.